

Right and Wrong Ways To Handle Children Who Show Signs of Genius

"It Is the 'Different' Child, the Difficult Child, the Unfortunate and Misunderstood Child Whom It Pays Society to Educate," Says Dr. A. Emil Schmitt.

Marguerite Moers Marshall.

Have you a little genius in your home? The chances are that if you have you don't know it, that if your dreamy, idle, sullen or passionate child harbors within him some faint spark of that world-illumination, creative genius, you merely set him down as "naughty" or even "incurable." But your eyes may be opened if you attend the third annual conference of the National Association for the Study and Education of Exceptional Children, meeting to-day at the College of the City of New York. For the first and most important topic which the conference considers is "The Exceptionally Bright Child" in short, the embryonic genius.

The imaginative mind has always been fascinated by the conception of greatness wasted in a hostile environment. Like water spilled on the sands of the desert. We all remember the tribute paid to the "brute, inglorious Milton" in the greatest story ever written. But it was remained for Dr. Q. Emil Schmitt of this city and his colleagues to make a vigorous, scientifically based effort to stop the waste. Dr. Schmitt is President of the Association for the Study of Exceptional Children, and it was with him that I talked to-day.

"The exceptionally bright child may be yours, may be mine, may live in an east side tenement," the doctor explained. "But whenever he lives he is likely to suffer from the same tragedy, misunderstanding by those who are nearest and dearest to him. Nobody can possibly estimate the effect of this lack of sympathy, either upon the child's own future well-being or upon the gift he has for the world."

"Then you don't believe in the old superstition that genius is strengthened by childhood?" I asked with raised, for I don't believe in it, either.

"Why should it not?" counter-queried the doctor. "Granted that many of the world's great men have had to break down stone walls to achieve their eminence. But think how much higher they might have gone could they have used all their forces for rising and not some of it in fighting! And their own personal happiness would have been so much greater."

PLANS FOR TREATMENT OF BUDDING GENIUS.

"But what is your plan for the treatment of the exceptional child?"

The first thing to do is to diagnose him. Broadly speaking, the number of exceptional, or atypical, children includes at least 5 per cent. of the entire school population. Now, it is an actual fact that not more than 1 per cent. are strictly abnormal, that is to say, feeble-minded or degenerate.

The agitation of alarmists has endeavored to confine public attention to this exceedingly small percentage. The exceptionally bright child has had to suffer from neglect, while a morbid interest has been wasted upon the exceptionally dull.

The latter, even after much time and expense, has been spent upon him, should always be kept apart from society. But the different child, the difficult child, the unfortunate and misunderstood child, is the one whom it pays society to educate. From being a misfit in his little circle, he is likely to develop into a particular credit to society. For such children there is now much medical protection, properly developed, destined them to become leaders rather than outcasts.

"It has even been estimated that, out of twenty abnormal children, from two



DR. A. EMIL SCHMITT

taken from one of the most expensive private schools of New York, where he was placed, he will also be a happy, healthy citizen."

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SNEED IS ALLOWED BAIL.

AUSTIN, Oct. 31.—Ben Sneed, slayer of Al Boyce Jr., at Amarillo, to-day was granted bail under \$20,000 bond. Sneed recently was refused bail at a habeas corpus hearing. The lower court held that in posing as a workman and secretly renting a house in front of which Al Boyce frequently passed Sneed had shown deliberate intent to kill.

Boyce escaped with Mrs. Sneed to Winnipeg, Canada, a year ago. Sneed killed Boyce's father in Fort Worth last winter over ensuing complications. Sneed's second trial for killing the older Boyce will be held Nov. 11, the first trial jury having disagreed.

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